

REVIEWS

The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation

Leland Ryken

Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL, 2002; 336pp., \$15.99; ISBN 1 58134 464 3

We cannot do anything about the proliferation of English Bible translations. They will keep coming. This is something to lament, not to celebrate. People are not more biblically literate as more and more English translations are available. On the contrary, they know less and less about the content of the Bible (p. 196).

This quotation serves to highlight the issue which Leland Ryken, Professor of English at Wheaton College, Illinois, is addressing in this book. Aware of the fact that the last two decades have seen a profusion of new translations of the Bible in English, Ryken's concern is to examine the principles which underlie the task of Bible translation. Reading his book, one is aware both of a burden and of a passion: a burden for the Word of God, which, he contends, some modern versions have failed to communicate fully, and a passion to highlight those principles which will secure excellence in Bible translation.

But this is no mere academic discussion of the merits of essential literalism over dynamic equivalence. It is a devastating critique of all translations which have applied the dynamic equivalence theory, on the basis that it is enough to communicate the *thought* of a passage. Translations like the NIV, the New Living Translation and *The Message*, are all flawed at this point, according to Ryken. By not paying attention to the individual words of the original text, they are guilty of obscuring much of the original world of the text as well as its literary qualities.

In fact, Ryken's work is the exposition of a simple principle: that any translation has to respect the words of the original speaker. When these words are the words of God, the importance of the task is magnified. Many modern translations, according to Ryken, have adopted fallacious pre-judgements: such as that the Bible is uniformly simple, or that it is essentially modern, or that the ultimate goal of translation is readability, or that we should translate as if the Bible writers were living today, or

that we should assume that readers are unfamiliar with the Bible, or that we need to eliminate figurative and abstract language from translation.

In fact, argues Ryken, so many fallacies abound regarding the biblical text, the art of translation and the readers of the Bible that publishers often take an *a priori* position which is at odds with the Bible's own theology of itself: that God breathed out the *words*. We may not find Mark's repeated use of 'and' to be modern, or readable, or colloquial – but, Ryken is arguing, God put them there, so we ought to keep them there!

Throughout this book, Ryken holds up the King James Version as the English version which consistently upheld the criteria for excellence in translation which he wishes modern translators to follow. While he also consistently argues that he does not wish to see a return to the uniform and uncritical acceptance of the KJV, he does not state explicitly which his preferred modern text is, although his having served on the committee of the English Standard Version and his numerous citations of the ESV is a giveaway.

Whether one accepts that the ESV is preferable to the NIV or not, it is difficult to refute the principles which Ryken articulates in this book. Modern translators have a primary obligation to translate the words which God gave, neither masking nor obscuring them in any way. Whatever our preferred translation, we would do well to visit Ryken's work, which is bound to disturb much contemporary thinking in this area.

Iain D. Campbell, Free Church of Scotland, Back, Isle of Lewis

Does God Have a Future? A Debate on Divine Providence

Christopher A. Hall & John Sanders

Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2003; 222pp., \$17.99; ISBN 0 8010 2604 0

When the New Age movement started, some of us thought that it would fairly quickly fade away from public view, like some other Western spiritual adventures of the last decades. We were wrong. It has apparently latched on to and picked up much that was on the ground and in the air, and is culturally significant. In some ways, this might be happening with open theism. The point is emphatically not to tar it by snide association with New Age. I'm thinking not of its substance or relation to religious orthodoxies, but of its cultural significance, in this case, in relation to

Western evangelical culture. The comparison is a broad one, but the debate over open theism may turn out to be a defining moment.

What is being defined? Two key questions appear to be at stake: the substantive one concerning the nature of God and the part-substantive, part-formal one concerning the criterion for what constitutes evangelical theology. This book, where two authors of differing standpoints on the doctrine of God examine the pros and cons of classical and open theism, underscores the fact that a third question is at stake which is, in one respect, more fundamental than either. It is the question of how evangelicals conduct their disagreements. Six strong endorsements on the back cover focus on this point, and one can see why. Throughout most of the book, our minds are likely to be occupied with the substantive issues at stake, though we note what John Sanders occasionally says about the attitudes that he has encountered or treatment received. By the end, our minds are likely to be off the substantive issues and occupied more with the question of the spirit and ethos of evangelical discussion.

The contributors indeed exhibit exemplary attitudes in this volume and the point of displaying them in a published volume is well made and should be well taken. They explain that a series of email exchanges, always destined for publication in some form, have been turned into this book. It covers the topics familiar in the 'open theism' debate. So the volume is meant as a theological contribution, as well as a public exercise in the exemplification of dialogical virtue. As a 'debate' (see the subtitle) it is somewhat frustrating. It is more an exchange, though plenty of debating goes on. The problem is that John Sanders quite regularly puts pointed questions to Christopher Hall that the latter does not answer, while Sanders himself generally tries to meet the objections. It does not look as though any editorial work done on the exchange accounts for this. And, naturally, neither can respond to everything or pursue every particular item in the discussion *ad infinitum*.

As far as this reviewer is concerned, if categorical judgement be made on the merits or demerits of open theism, a firm distinction is required. Critical appraisal of classical theism or Calvinism with respect to such things as timelessness, impassibility, foreordination and evil is one thing. That is obviously not new, nor do open theists say that it is. But when Christopher Hall makes his strongest statement: 'I find the possibility of divine error to be terribly problematic and its implications, theologically and pastorally, horrific' (p. 132), we are on to something very different. This appears to me to be the crux of the matter, in an assessment of open theism. It is at this point, surely, that evangelical theology is threatened, though, in saying it, I should want to distance

myself from those who are attitudinally keen to sniff out heresy in the evangelical fold, in the way that many seem to have gone about things in North America. And in concentrating my comment on open theism, I am aware of the danger of pondering one 'side' more than the other. As far as this volume goes, Christopher Hall and John Sanders are to be thanked for the personally and theologically constructive possibilities that they have brought to this whole debate.

Stephen Williams, Union Theological College, Belfast

After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition

Richard A. Muller

Oxford Studies in Historical Theology. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003; x+275pp., £35; ISBN 0-19-515701-X

Muller's book comes at about the same time as the long-awaited publication of his four-volume study *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* (Baker, 2003). This is fortuitous, for *After Calvin* provides much of the methodological discussion important for appreciating the larger project. *After Calvin* also follows upon Muller's well-received *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (OUP, 2000), in which Muller argues skilfully and convincingly for a rigorous contextualisation of Calvin's method and theology which entails the abandonment of numerous anachronistic, twentieth-century interpretive grids. In *After Calvin*, Muller turns his attention to Calvin's successors with similar intentions: just as the traditionally 'humanist' Calvin is also scholastic (so *Unaccommodated Calvin*), so the traditionally 'scholastic' orthodox are found to be humanists, too.

Unfortunately, *After Calvin* has numerous spelling, punctuation, and printing errors in common with its forerunner. The subtitle for *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Paternoster, 1999), for instance, is regularly misprinted as 'Essays in Reappraisal' (beginning with p. 195, n.2). This is surprising given the quality of the publisher. Also, though the complaint is frequently heard, the use of very cumbersome endnotes rather than footnotes is disappointing. There is an index but no bibliography.

As for actual content, however, there is much to delight. For those already familiar with Muller's work this volume does not disappoint. It reflects the attention to detail, extensive familiarity with primary sources,

and judicious assessment Muller has led us to expect. As Muller tells us (p. v), the essays in *After Calvin* are all, with the exceptions of the introduction, one essay, and the afterword, revised and updated versions of pieces published over the course of two decades. The combination of these essays in one volume makes what might appear a redundant publication in fact a very useful one: unlike before, when one had to glean from various journals and edited volumes, one now has single-volume access to Muller's most penetrating essays on the methodology, scholarship, and thought of post-Reformation Reformed Protestantism. This alone makes the book worthy of publication; the revisions simply add to its value.

The book divides naturally into two parts, one addressing matters of method and definition and the other applying this method to specific questions, figures, and ideas. Part I consists of four essays, the first (ch. 2) dealing with the misunderstood terms 'scholasticism' and 'orthodoxy'. Reacting to the largely pejorative sense in which these terms are used, Muller argues that 'scholasticism' denotes fundamentally a common method of argument and presentation, and does not alone indicate commitment to a particular philosophical metaphysic. We can be thankful also that both parts of Muller's classic methodological essay on 'Calvin and the "Calvinists": Assessing Continuities and Discontinuities between the Reformation and Orthodoxy', originally published in *Calvin Theological Journal*, have been revised and included here.

In Part II, several essays will stir considerable interest. All who are involved in ministerial and theological education, whether students or professors, will benefit from Muller's discussion in chapter 6: 'Calling, Character, Piety, and Learning: Paradigms for Theological Education in the Era of Protestant Orthodoxy'. The essay on exegesis and theology (ch. 10), the piece not previously published, is also valuable and should stimulate further similar investigations. Finally, Muller's fine study of the covenant of works in seventeenth-century Reformed orthodoxy (ch. 11) is sure to draw attention. Among other fine points, Muller persuasively demonstrates that the Reformed orthodox understanding of 'covenant' cannot be reduced to legalism, speculation regarding the translation of *berith* and *diatheke* by *foedus*, or the effort to reduce the 'tension' between election and human responsibility (pp. 177-81).

Predicting the reception of *After Calvin* is not an easy matter, however. It is difficult to find a place where *After Calvin* is more needed than in this country, where a very recent publication of a doctoral thesis proves that the standard of scholarship for work on Calvin and the Reformed orthodox is still often very poor. In this publication, for

example, whose author I will spare from naming, little more than a dismissive nod is given to the extensive work by Muller and others on the historical and textual points at issue, and the author chooses merely to repeat in new form the heavily-criticised and, in the view of many in this field, discredited interpretive model which pits Calvin's Christ-centred approach against orthodoxy's 'legal, contractual, and introspective' theology. Unfortunately, this situation is enough to breed an ungrounded cynicism about the value of scholarship. Independent of the relative merits of Muller's arguments, a reasonable standard of scholarship would seem to demand at the very least a fair and attentive hearing as well as serious interaction at the textual and historical level. *After Calvin* is a work worthy of serious attention; for those writing on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Reformed theology, to ignore Muller and the many others doing similar work would seem the worst form of scholarly obscurantism. This reviewer, at least, sincerely hopes the publication of *After Calvin* will help ensure that this state of affairs no longer persists.

Mark A. Garcia, New College, University of Edinburgh

Preaching Christ in All of Scripture

Edmund P. Clowney

Crossway Books, Wheaton, IL., 2003; 189pp, \$15.99/£8.46; ISBN 1 58134 452 X

Edmund Clowney's recent work entitled *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* is a book which utilises a combination of deductive and inductive approaches to encourage preachers of today to present Christ from every location of Scripture. The heart and mind of Clowney's conviction clearly permeates the pages of the text as he offers theoretical and practical help for understanding the central role that Christ must have in the message of the pulpit. The author's passion for Christ-centred preaching is reflected in the following statement from the preface, 'Preachers who ignore the history of redemption in their preaching are ignoring the witness of the Holy Spirit to Jesus in all the Scriptures' (p. 10). As most expect from Clowney, an emphasis on the unity of Scripture based on the single story of redemption which weaves the Testaments together is the foundation point for his argument.

Clowney's book may be divided into two main sections. The first consists of two initial chapters which substantiate Christ's presence in the Old Testament and role in preaching, respectively. The second section

of the book is the final thirteen chapters which present Clowney's own sermons that exemplify Christ-centred preaching from the Old and New Testaments.

In chapter 1 Clowney expounds his view that the key to preaching Christ in the Old Testament is 'to take into account the full drama of redemption, and its realization in Christ' (p. 11). He focuses in on Christ's presence in the Old Testament as Lord and Servant of the Covenant of Redemption. It is here that Clowney shows the way that Christ is not only anticipated in the Old Testament, but more accurately *present* in the Old Testament by the way in which he most appropriately satisfies the Lord and Servant imagery in light of New Testament characterisation of Jesus. Introducing these themes allows Clowney to move into a treatment of typology and symbolism, and other evidences of Jesus' formation in Old Testament contexts. It is at this juncture that Clowney's discussion becomes a bit cumbersome. The reader begins to feel the claustrophobia of fitting a complex hermeneutical discussion within the confines of a few pages. Clowney's discussion whets the appetite but leaves the reader hungry for clarification of terms and concepts he mentions such as typology, symbolism, analogy, allegory, identity, moralism, meaning, and 'original meaning'; more specifically, the relationships between them (*cf. esp. p. 21*). For example, is typology a kind of symbolism or synonymous with symbolism? Does the Old Testament text's 'original meaning' contain the Christological reading or should this remain distinct? How does the text, as an original message to Israel, constrain Christological interpretation (p. 44)? Clowney's discussion falls short of empowering the preacher to use or discern these ideas and terms with confidence. Despite the problems with this portion of the book, he does provide a helpful chart (p. 32) to explain his movement from the Old Testament text to the act of preaching. The chapter as a whole also presents numerous concrete examples of Christ in the Old Testament.

The tenor of the book changes a bit in the second chapter as Clowney rehearses the way in which Christ is present in sermon preparation. He does not provide systematic instructions for sermon construction, but rather reminds the reader of where Christ resides in the preparation, content, and delivery of biblical messages. Clowney's years of experience and wisdom shine through the chapter as valuable nuggets of insight and truth saturate the discussion.

The final portion and greater part of the book is a sampling of Clowney in action. His thirteen sermons are enjoyable to read and make the book worth having on the bookshelf. They exhibit in a general way

the principles presented in the first two chapters. He effectively demonstrates the depth and fruitfulness of a Christ-centred approach to preaching which is sensitive to the overarching redemption story told by the two-Testament canon. Any preacher would benefit from having Clowney's sermons as legitimate examples of preaching Christ in all of Scripture.

Steven D. Mason, University of St Andrews

On Revival: A Critical Examination

Andrew Walker and Kristin Aune (eds)

Paternoster Press, Carlisle, 2003; 252pp., £14.99; ISBN 1 84227 201 2

Some, at first glance, may bemoan the release of yet another treatise on 'revival', but this is surely one of the most honest, thoughtful and relevant appraisals of the subject to have been published in modern times. Based on a two-day symposium held in London in 2002, no fewer than 16 scholars bring together the separate fruits of their observations and studies regarding one of the most discussed (and misunderstood) topics in the church today. Each 'paper' comes under one of three headings – theological, historical or contemporary; the latter two focusing particularly on the UK situation – though there is a fair amount of interplay between groupings. While the contributors – who come from a wide range of evangelical traditions and academic disciplines – have differences of opinion on certain matters, there is general consensus on some major issues.

The most obvious of these is the looseness of meaning of the word 'revival' itself. It is used in many contexts to mean many different things; hence the sub-division of the term by Steve Latham / Andrew Walker into six categories (p. 172):

- R1: a spiritual quickening of the individual believer
- R2: a deliberate meeting or campaign to deepen the faith of believers and bring non-believers to faith
- R3: an unplanned period of spiritual enlivening in a local church
- R4: a regional experience of spiritual quickening and widespread conversions
- R5: societal or cultural 'awakenings'
- R6: the possible reversal of secularisation and 'revival' of Christianity as such.

R5 and R6 are in fact extremely rare events; the term 'revival' generally being understood by evangelicals to refer to R3 or R4 events. This leads to another area of agreement among writers – the necessity of differentiating between 'revival' and 'revivalism'. The latter depends on human efforts rather than being a spontaneous work of God, and thus generally appears as R2 (however, it is important to note that revival and revivalism may occur together in a particular setting).

Noting these basic premises, we can briefly consider a number of individual studies. Max Turner offers the most helpful answers to the question 'Revival in the New Testament?' I have read, while from an equally detailed biblical perspective, Graham Macfarlane examines the role of the Holy Spirit in awakenings. There are numerous 'Lessons from History', including Mark Stibbe's illuminations on the ministry of little known Hans Nielsen Hague during Norway's Great Awakening at the turn of the nineteenth century. Kenneth Jeffrey's essay is a condensed form of his meticulously-researched PhD thesis on the 1859-62 revival in the North East of Scotland (published by Paternoster as *When the Lord Walked the Land*, 2001), the main objective of which is to show how R2-R4 revivals vary richly in timing, duration and manifestation depending on their context (e.g. among urban, farming and fishing communities).

Andrew Walker and Neil Hudson bring to light the difficult relationship between Pentecostal revivalist George Jeffreys and the Elim denomination he established, while further (mini-)profiles are given of Welsh revivalist Evan Roberts and American Lonnie Frisbee (a 'catalytic figure' in the early Vineyard movement). Meanwhile, Mark Petterson's exposure of early nineteenth-century pre-millennialism in Britain under auspices of the Albury Circle shows the ongoing connection between revival(ism) and prophecy. Other writers disdain the many false prophecies of revival which have beleaguered the Western church in more recent times; Tom Smail rather cynically noting that 'the only revivals that I have had anything to do with are those that did not happen'! (p. 59).

Smail also wonders whether decline in the European church isn't so much due to our failure to bring about revival, but rather due to the church being under judgement and in 'exile'. Several other essays make for equally sombre reading. Some note their disapproval of human methods to secure revival, with their employment of aids such as the 'JIM' campaign, prayer warfare and an over-emphasis on human emotions. Thus, while Stibbe applauds the Toronto Blessing for holding at its centre a theology of the love of God (he describes revival as

essentially 'a falling in love with Christ'), other contributors are more wary of such phenomena-based activity. On more neutral ground, and despite all that has been previously written on the 'Blessing', Rob Warner's reflections on 'Ecstatic spirituality and entrepreneurial revivalism' add noteworthy new insights.

In yet more sober tone, Nigel Wright and Ian Stackhouse individually suggest that 'revivalistic' methods have done far more harm than good for evangelicalism; the latter writer lamenting the church's 'obsession with growth, of a numerical kind' (p. 241), and controversially pronouncing every recent evangelistic aid from seeker-sensitive evangelism to praise-marching – and even the Alpha Course – as 'faddism'. In contrast to this view, one or two writers regard 'revivalist' methods, though altogether rather 'routinised and formatted affairs', as possibly 'just as spiritually authentic' as 'higher' forms of revival (Walker / Aune p. xxii).

Even the most negative of essays offer hope; Smail looks to a 'resurrection' of the church through reflection and repentance; Stackhouse sees hope in a renewed 'understanding of and confidence in, the gospel itself' (p. 243). With so many varied points of view – and no overall 'conclusion' – the reader will undoubtedly disagree with some things stated in these pages. Yet one cannot fail to be impressed with the way difficult issues are tackled head-on, thus providing much food for personal thought as well as for public discussion; also proving a valuable source of reference (each chapter has its own mini-bibliography). With all 15 essays being of genuine interest, this fascinating study contributes significantly to the whole discussion of revival at the start of the twenty-first century, and is an almost essential tool for any serious student of revival and evangelism. Wholeheartedly, I commend it.

Tom Lennie, Orkney

First Theology: God, Scripture and Hermeneutics

Kevin J. Vanhoozer

Apollos, Leicester, 2002; 384pp., £17.99; ISBN 0 85111 207 6

The aim of *First Theology* is to do theology having God as our first thought, Scripture as our second and hermeneutics as our third. Whilst it is aimed at a scholarly constituency, there is much which is devotional about *First Theology*. Many sections require prayerful meditation while producing keener Christian discipleship.

First Theology is a collection of essays Vanhoozer has published in other forums. The author of *Is There a Meaning in This Text*, Vanhoozer

comes from a Reformed perspective. He is willing to interact and engage in meaningful dialogue with pluralists, pantheists and postmoderns.

The question of *First Theology* relates to whether we begin the process of theological understanding from the knowledge of God or from our interpretation of Scripture. Vanhoozer's introductory chapter explores and criticises each possibility. He lays down his own 'first theology': we must resist either-or and affirm both-and. Vanhoozer calls it 'theological hermeneutics' and counsels us not merely to look along, but to live along the text.

The remainder of the book is divided into three sections, each of which practises theological hermeneutics. Section one contains three chapters reflecting on God. They address the issues of pluralism, God's love and pantheism. In these chapters, Vanhoozer steers a genuinely innovative course to the safe havens of Reformed teaching. My only complaint about these chapters is that they are too short; they leave one hoping that sometime in the future Vanhoozer will devote more time to expanding and presenting them in another monograph.

Section two contains two chapters focusing on the Scriptures. Familiarity with speech-act theory allows Vanhoozer to establish a coherent and defensible doctrine of Scripture. The most significant chapter in this section, and in the whole book, is chapter 6 – 'From Speech Acts to Scripture Acts' – which gives a ten step summary of theological hermeneutics. Vanhoozer shows theological astuteness by using locution, illocution and perlocution as categories of speech-act communication. He does this in order to overcome Barthian confusion as to the inspiration of the Scriptures. Vanhoozer clears up the confusion by stating that 'the Bible is the Word of God (in the sense of its illocutionary acts) and... that the Bible becomes the Word of God (in the case of achieving its perlocutionary effects).'

Section three covers issues of hermeneutics ranging from the ethics of interpretation to understanding modern culture. This section amply shows Vanhoozer's ability to apply theological hermeneutics to a wide range of conditions and situations. The way he introduces his method in each chapter is innovative and at times entertaining. This section provides convincing evidence that theological hermeneutics is a robust first theology.

Vanhoozer's scholarship is of the highest order. His breadth of reading and quotation is vast and well marshalled. *First Theology* is easy to use with references at the foot of each page and indexes of authors and subjects at the end of the book.

As with his previous books, *First Theology* is not easy to read. Vanhoozer's writing style is dense and at times staccato. However, writing as he is in a field where not being misunderstood is as important as being understood, this is perhaps understandable. Furthermore, philosophical discourse is by definition complex. Compared to many other philosophers whom this reviewer has read, Vanhoozer's style is lucid and accurate.

First Theology is the first floor of the house Vanhoozer is erecting as the foundation of theological hermeneutics. It propels him into the front rank of evangelical scholarship. However, Vanhoozer's aim is consistently that in meeting the Christ of the Scriptures we will learn Christ and come to know him as Lord.

Colin Dow, St Vincent Street Free Church of Scotland, Glasgow

Occupy until I Come: A. T. Pierson and the Evangelisation of the World

Dana L. Roberts

Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 2003; 312pp., \$32.00/£21.99; ISBN 0 8028 0780 1

Where has this man been all this time? Arthur Tappan Pierson (1837-1911) seems hardly known in Britain, though I cannot speak for the USA, where his life and ministry were based. His was a life too full even to be sketched here. Dana Roberts (Boston University) does a superb, highly readable job of covering his very extensive interests, acquaintanceship, and prolific preached and literary output, within a mere 312 pages.

The only frustration is that nothing can be dealt with in much depth. Questions came to mind, when quite bald statements were made, with little to substantiate them. These were chiefly concerned with the connections in Pierson's thinking between particular doctrinal leanings – for example, that his driving concern for evangelism and mission was enhanced by his eventual persuasion as to the validity of premillennial dispensationalism. Having said that, Roberts can well be excused, for the sake of brevity, and the book is written so capably as to draw the reader on almost 'breathlessly' to the next development in Pierson's thinking. All in all it serves well the purpose of this type of biography.

In a number of crucial respects Pierson did 'move' over the course of a long ministry, but it was mostly gradual and considered. At the same time he was a man of very deep convictions, and a passion for spiritual

realities. While many a reader may disagree with his conclusions, it would be a sad day if his motives were called into question. As so often, his work and thought should be judged in the light of the day in which he lived. In this regard, Roberts shows herself particularly adept: the intricacies of the social, political, cultural and religious scenes which unfolded over his lifetime are painted very clearly.

If space permitted, it would be good to give an outline of Pierson's leading preoccupations. At least, glaringly eminent amongst them (and thus having to be mentioned) was his innovative and thorough approach to the call upon the church, from God, to mission and evangelism. Using new 'scientific' approaches, and gathering vast amounts of information, he set out quantitative scenarios for the evangelisation of the world. Out of this grew the catch-phrase 'the evangelisation of the world in this generation', which proved such a rallying-cry for the remarkable movement into foreign missions in the latter part of the nineteenth century. As a long-term editor of *The Missionary Review*, his influence was considerable, as it was in the Britain of his day. He spent considerable time here, and both extensively influenced, and was influenced by, the British church.

Dana Roberts provides a good read, and a valuable contribution to an understanding of the multiple strands to be found in the development of the North American church, and of an important surge in international mission-work. These directions also had significant impact on the British church scene and, inevitably, on the growth of the Christian church throughout the world. A. T. Pierson played such a leading role, he deserves a biography of this calibre, in our day. Possibly, anything more substantial, of an older style, would deter some, but this book can be usefully read by any Christian – all of us need the kind of stimulus it provides. Especially with its closing section (*A Note on Sources*), for the enthusiast, it supplies an encouraging opening into what promises to be a very rewarding field. Technically, there are few notes provided with the text. If quotations are used, the reference is commonly given in the course of the text itself, and this is complemented by the *Sources* section.

On the assumption that this quality may be found in the other ten titles in this series, Eerdmans is also to be complimented on this project: the *Library of Religious Biography*.

David D. Miller, Cobham Presbyterian Church

Some Bible translations have risen to the status of great literature. Among them are the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, and the King James Version. Though lacking in Greek linguistic sophistication, the Septuagint became great literature because of its unique role in Jewish and Early Church history. Jerome's Latin Vulgate impacted many Bible translations during the Reformation and the two centuries immediately following.

- 1 Leland Ryken, *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2002).
- 2 Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1998), xv.
- 3 Ryken, *The Word of God in English*, 31.

With so many Bible translations available, how do you make a choice between them? How do you even know what the criteria should be for making a choice? As an expert in English literature and literary theory, Leland Ryken approaches the translation debate from a practical artistic viewpoint. He believes that many modern translations take liberties with the biblical text that would not be allowed with any other type of literary work. Also, what readers are presented with as biblical text is actually far from the original text. In literature, a simplified version of Milton's work is not Milton's work.

The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation. Leland Ryken, C. John Collins. pdf. Crossway Books. 1491897. English. 2002. [Download]. < < < PREV | NEXT > > >. ĩ» ħ